

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 HEW-08

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R 110442Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2316

INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

UNCLAS CANBERRA 0195

PASS: AGRICULTURE FOR MEEKER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, EAGR, AS

SUBJ: RECORD FLOODS IN NEW SOUTH WALES

1. FOLLOWING HEAVY RAINS IN EASTERN QUEENSLAND AND NORTHERN NEW SOUTH WALES TOTALLING UP TO 19 INCHES SINCE JAN. 7, NORTHWESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES IS EXPERIENCING WHAT PRESS DESCRIBES AS WORST FLOODING ON RECORD. WATER REPORTED COVERING AREA 160 MILES LONG AND 100 MILES WIDE WEST AND SOUTH OF MOREE. DARLING RIVER BASIN EXPECTED TO BE AFFECTED AS CRESTS MOVE SOUTHWARD NEXT WEEK. ALBURY-WODONGA AREA, AT CONFLUENCE MURRUMBIDGEE AND MURRAY RIVERS, HIGHLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO FLOODING AND WILL ALSO FEEL EFFECTS OF SOUTHWARD MOVING RAINS.

2. AS AREAS INVOLVED RELATIVELY SPARSELY POPULATED, VIRTUALLY NO LOSS OF LIFE REPORTED ALTHOUGH SIZEABLE AND APPARENTLY WELL-ORGANIZED RESCUE AND EVACUATION

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OPERATIONS UNDERWAY. STATE OF NEW SOUTH WALES PROVIDING

RELIEF FUNDS FOR THOSE AFFECTED AND HAS ASKED FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO JOIN IN. DAMAGE TO COTTON AND OTHER PRIMARY CROPS IMPORTANT TO LOCAL ECONOMY REPORTED BY PRESS TO BE CONSIDERABLE. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION GATHERED BY AGATTACHE OFFICE JAN. 11, HOWEVER, THESE REPORTS SOMEWHAT EXAGGERATED, AND ACCURATE ASSESSMENT IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL FLOOD WATERS RECEDE, PROBABLY MIDDLE NEXT WEEK.

3. COMMENT. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT COTTON CROP SERIOUSLY AFFECTED, AND LOSSES MAY EXCEED 1970 LOSS OF ABOUT 50 PERCENT IN 60,000 ACRE WEE WAA/NARRABRI AREA. CONDITIONS IN MACQUARIE VALLEY NOT SERIOUS AND LITTLE LOSS EXPECTED THERE.

SAFFLOWER AND LINSEED CROPS IN AREA NOT YET HARVESTED DUE EARLIER RAINS AND NOW COMPLETE WRITE-OFF. SUNFLOWER CROPS WERE ALREADY AFFECTED BY WET WEATHER WITH HEAD ROTTS AND DISEASE PROBLEMS, AND PRODUCTION WILL BE LOWER THAN EARLIER EXPECTED, ALTHOUGH NEW SOWINGS TO MID-FEBRUARY POSSIBLE. SOYBEAN PLANTINGS, EXPECTED TO BE RECORD EARLIER, SERIOUSLY REDUCED DUE TO WET CONDITIONS. FINAL RESULTS WILL DEPEND ON LENGTH OF SUBMERSION, BUT YIELD REDUCTION PROBABLE EVEN UNDER MOST FAVORABLE CONDITIONS OF RAPID DRAINAGE AND SUNNY WEATHER FROM NOW ON. STOCK LOSSES NOT EXPECTED TO BE LARGE, ALTHOUGH INDIVIDUAL FARMERS MAY BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED.

HARROP

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